



Date: January 23, 2023  
 To: City Council

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Subject: Resolution adopting the proposed 2050 General Plan's Public Participation Plan that defines the strategies, tools, and techniques for effective, early, and continuous public participation.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

A recommendation that City Council adopt the General Plan's Public Participation Plan that includes the strategies, tools, and techniques that will be used to ensure effective and consistent engagement of all geographic, ethnic, and economic areas of the City of Mesa.

**BACKGROUND:**

A general plan lays out the long-term aspirations for a community and articulates its vision. The general plan guides the physical, economic, and social development decisions of community leaders, residents, and businesses over the upcoming ten years.

Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) 9-461.06 requires that a municipality readopt or update its general plan every ten years. Mesa's current general plan (The Mesa 2040 General Plan) was adopted and ratified by voters in 2014. This offers an opportunity to revisit and update the City's vision. With a clear Vision, Guiding Principles, Policies, and Actions, the City of Mesa can realize the aspiration: "moving forward together."

ARS 9-461.06 requires that the governing body adopt a written public participation procedure that provides:

- The broad dissemination of proposals and alternatives;
- The opportunity for written comments;
- Public hearings after effective notice;
- Open discussions, communication programs and information services; and
- Consideration of public comments.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Mesa 2050 General Plan's Public Participation Plan establishes three key strategies to engage the citizens of the City. These include inclusive engagement, innovative use of technology and seamless coordination with other City in-process plans. By using the three strategies, the City is committed to ensuring that Mesa residents will have opportunities to participate in a wide variety of ways.

### **Public Participation Strategies**

To ensure inclusive engagement, public meetings will be held throughout the City. Residents unable to attend in person will also have opportunities to engage via online surveys and virtual events. In both cases, translation services and Spanish language materials will be available. An engagement tracking tool will be used to help the project team understand the tools and techniques that are working and to adjust engagement tools as needed. Community organizations within Mesa, including but not limited to, educational institutions, health organizations, airports, major business employers, non-profits, and HOAs, will be contacted directly for input. Organizations outside Mesa, with statutory review authority, will also be notified and invited to participate.

The innovative use of technology will help facilitate meaningful engagement and will be available anytime and any place. The City will use infographics, immersive 360-degree panorama images, renderings, and modeling to help the community better visualize the future that they envision. A project website will host a variety of information including interactive mapping, questionnaires, polls, scheduling information and 2050 General Plan draft documents for public review and comment. Public events will use immersive technologies that allow residents to view choices and trade-offs in real time using virtual and augmented reality and visualizations.

The seamless coordination with other City in-process plans strategy ensures that concurrent planning efforts of other City departments are into the Public Participation Plan. Coordination will occur with the Balanced Housing Master Plan, Transportation Master Plan, Transit Master Plan, and Integrated Water Master Plan. The Public Participation Plan aligns the public engagement from each plan into a single coordinated series of events to reduce and simplify the commitment for the public to participate.

### **Project Branding**

Attractive and engaging branding will be used for all communication materials used. The City created two taglines and logos to be used during the update process. During the public engagement process of the update and concurrent plan updates, the tagline, “Tomorrow’s Mesa: Planning Our Future” and logo will be used. The logo provides a unifying, recognizable brand and messaging for the plans being completed by the City. Once public engagement for the plan updates is complete, the “Tomorrow’s Mesa: Moving Forward Together” logo will be used for the Mesa General Plan 2050 document.

### **Project Team and Advisory Committees**

To ensure the 2050 General Plan Update is a City-wide effort, several teams and committees have been established. While staff from the Development Services Department are coordinating the day-to day aspects of the project, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has been created and includes subject matter experts from across City departments. The TAC is primarily responsible for the technical review of the General Plan and will participate in a series of interviews and questionnaires.

A General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) has also been formed and is composed of Mesa residents. The GPAC is responsible for review of the Public Participation Plan, public comments, and providing input on the content of the General Plan.

A group of community volunteers, called Community Catalysts, will also be assembled to serve as a bridge between their neighborhoods and the planning process.

**Process and Timing**

The Public Participation Plan provides opportunities for public engagement throughout the update process from January 2023 to the Mesa City Council's adoption of the General Plan in May 2024.